

Gamification in Lifestyle

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Abstract: Gamification is a transformation of something into a game. It is applying game-like elements into everyday activities such as exercise to increase engagement and motivation through rewards. Applying game principles to everyday, mundane tasks can make life more exciting. Gamification uses the same motivational psychological principles that have always been around: self-affirmation, competition, peer support, and gratification through rewards. It has become an increasingly popular tool for motivating individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles. Lifestyle gamification is essentially treating your life as if it were a game. This paper provides an overview on gamification lifestyle with examples.

Keywords: games, gamification, lifestyle, gamification lifestyle.

INTRODUCTION

As Robert Kiyosaki, “Life is a game, where either you lose or you learn.” Games have always been a crucial part of human life. Humans are naturally born to play. From children’s “make believe” games to social media likes, the elements from games surround us. Like any game, the goal of the game of life is to reach the highest level possible. The equation of life is portrayed in Figure 1 [1]. As shown in Figure 2 we get trapped in a failure loop that is increasing the friction on our momentum and happiness [1]. Mastering the game of life may be tough, but it is a task that must be done to achieve success. The key to success in the game of life is finding out what truly makes you happy, and then continually taking action on those things until they become habitual.

Games have become favorite entertainment activity for many people worldwide. They are capable of engaging people by tapping into fan knowledge and offering some rewards. Competitive games are based on the desire to win. Figure 3 shows different uses of games. Games give us a sense of taking part in something bigger than ourselves. Gamification is the process of turning a mundane task into a game that motivates in order to complete the task. It uses your brains naturally occurring neurotransmitters to trick you into working more efficiently and having fun. There are several gamification techniques that can help you turn boring or challenging tasks in your life into an enjoyable game [2]. Gamification and serious games are often grouped together. While games and gamification have a lot in common, they are not exactly the same. Game elements are the building blocks of gamification. Although Gamification does not equal “playing games,” everyone should play games a few times a month [3].

Gamification can take different forms using a combination of game design elements to create the environment for learning and activation. There are eight “core drives” that make games so attractive [4]:

✓ Epic meaning and calling.

- ✓ Development and accomplishment.
- ✓ Empowerment of creativity and feedback.
- ✓ Ownership and possession.
- ✓ Social influence and relatedness or envy.
- ✓ Scarcity and impatience.
- ✓ Unpredictability and curiosity.
- ✓ Loss and avoidance.

WHAT IS GAMIFICATION?

The word "gamification" was coined in 2002 by Nick Pelling, a British inventor, but it did not gain popularity until 2010. The idea of gamification came from the fact that the gaming industry was the first to master human-focused design and we are now learning from games. Gamification is not a new concept, but it is deeply rooted in marketing endeavors, such as points cards, grades, and degrees, and workplace productivity [5]. Researchers became interested in gamification because the concept could be implemented in different ways to motivate people. Gamification has become hugely popular in all walks of life, including education, business, and workplace.

The gamification can be viewed in two ways: (1) adopting the act of playing a video game into everyday use, (2) the act of using game elements to make non-games more enjoyable. It is applied in education, business, sports, marketing, and finance. It is currently one of the largest trends in education. Traditional education has been found to be ineffective in motivating and engaging many students. Gamification is cutting-edge approach which is producing positive results in every region of the world.

Everyone loves games. Gamification just takes advantage of that innate desire. It can make practice fun. It can make the routine less dull. Online games have become bolder and more diverse. Gamification involves the introduction of gameplay to a traditionally non-game environment. Its goal is to encourage user engagement.

The most popular gamification features include [6,7]:

- *Points*: They represent progress and accomplishment; they are often used to obtain rewards. Learners earn points for completing tasks or achieving a certain result.
- *Leaderboards*: Learners can compete to earn the most points and rank highest out of their peers. Leaderboards can be an exciting and dynamic addition to the learning experience.
- *Badges*: They are similar representation to points, often also representing a status. Reward completion, good results, and exemplary behavior with virtual badges that learners can accumulate on their profile.
- *Rewards*: Beyond badges and points, real-life rewards like vouchers and discounts can further incentivize participation.

These elements can be used to gamify your app.

GAMIFICATION LIFESTYL

We, humans, are creatures of habit, and breaking bad habits can be an uphill task. Whether it's quitting smoking, eating healthier, or exercising regularly, we all have habits we'd like to change. But change requires motivation, and finding that motivation can be a challenge. The majority of chronic conditions that plague the USA are modifiable by lifestyle change.

Lifestyle gamification is the process of turning a mundane task into a game that drives a boost in motivation. It is a means of playing your way to success. It helps in learning how to avoid procrastination, find your purpose, and live your real life like a hardcore gamer.

Most people have many apps on their cell phones which use gamification techniques to motivate them and promote good behavior. Typical examples of popular gamification include the following [8]:

- ✓ Productivity apps
- ✓ Health and fitness apps
- ✓ Dietary or weight loss apps
- ✓ Mental health and meditation apps
- ✓ Language learning apps
- ✓ Social media apps
- ✓ Dating or social apps
- ✓ Savings or credit score apps

GAMIFICATION LIFESTYLE EXAMPLES

Gamification is the process of adding game-like elements to a task to encourage participation. The principles of gamification can improve creativity, learning, participation, collaboration, wellness, marketing, communications, and motivation. Many companies are using gamification to enhance employee performance, promote health and wellness activities, improve retention in online learning, teach people how to code, etc. Here we consider typical applications of gamification lifestyle.

- *Health:* Games offer an attractive alternative to traditional health interventions. More than 70% of Americans remain obese or overweight. Promoting behavioral change has long been a challenge for medical professionals. Gamification promises to make the change more manageable and rewarding. Lifestyle gamification can be applied for health purposes, making behavioral changes fun and engaging. There are weight loss gaming apps (such as MySugar and Mango Health) which can be beneficial for patients with diabetes [9]. Figure 4 shows a typical application of gamification in health [10].
- *Engagement:* This is what makes the world go round. You want to engage your children in school works to avoid getting bored, learning nothing, and misbehaving. You want to engage your employees with their tasks. Studies have shown that people work and behave better when they are engaged. Gamification is a powerful tool for engagement. It works with our brain chemistry to create behavioral changes. Gamification offers the possibility of bringing real-world situations to life in a controlled environment.
- *Family Engagement:* More than half of Americans live with at least one chronic condition. The majority of these conditions are preventable with healthy lifestyle behaviors. Lifestyle interventions, which seek to impact multiple behaviors, have started to incorporate family members for social support while meeting their psychological needs. Using game design elements to engage family members has the potential to improve on traditional interventions. Family members have influence in the lived environment and can have a significant impact on a person's ability and desire to change behaviors. Lifestyle interventions can either manage chronic conditions or prevent the onset of chronic conditions for at-risk populations. Management interventions for children are more likely to use points, badges, and leaderboards than

management interventions for adults. Since the primary goal of a lifestyle intervention is to change a participant's behavior, each component of the intervention is designed to achieve goals [11].

- *Fitness:* We all know that exercising is healthy, but it is boring and hard. Gamification makes it fun. Recent studies have shown that “gamifying” exercise can improve one's motivation and make fitness more effective and exciting. Gamifying is done by taking a workout regime and then incorporating game mechanics to increase one's motivation. Gamifying activities have become the latest trend, especially among fitness apps [12]. Health is an Apple's gamified fitness app for tracking things like heart rate, sleep, activity, hydration, calories, and your menstrual cycle. MyFitnessPal is a calorie and nutrition counting app for weight management. Nike+ is a fitness app from Nike that motivates and engages users to hit their wellness goals [13]. An example of fitness gamification is shown in Figure 5 [14].
- *Raising Funds:* Gamification can be used to raise funds for charity purposes. Movember and Crowdrise are two examples of gamification app that are turning fund-raising into a social, fun, and exciting game. Movember campaign encourages men of 21 different countries to ask their friends and family to sponsor them in order to raise awareness about prostate cancer and other health issues affecting men. Crowdrise is an on-line platform to raise funds for social purposes in a funny, personalized, simple, and participative way. Participants share all sorts of goals on their profiles, for example giving up their birthday [15]. Penn Rules allows users to integrate savings habits with their lifestyle,
- *Mindfulness:* The modern popularity of the concept of mindfulness is due to the integration of gamification within its delivery. There are several apps that can assist you in practicing mindfulness at home. The most popular mindfulness app is “Calm.” The Apple Watch's Mindfulness app brings thoughtful, breathing, and meditations directly to your wrist. A less obvious integrations is the bedtime reminders on most smartphones which align with your sleep schedule. You can turn your living room into a suitable place to practice mindfulness [16].
- *Talent Management:* The growing interest in gamification stems from a desire to increase engagement levels among employees and employ game mechanics to non-game activities such as recruitment, training, and wellness. Human resource personnel and the Department of Defense are using gaming to recruit, develop, and motivate workers. One can use gamification to better recruit, train, equip, and engage employees [17].

BENEFITS

Games are everywhere today and one would be surprised how much it influences other aspects of life. People can make a game out of anything. People who study game or practice lifestyle gamification can tell you what a simple game can do. Most people agree that the lifestyle gamification philosophy is appealing. It is a the lifestyle that is simply treating your life as if it was a game and you are a hardcore player. It is the core philosophy that set people on the course of entrepreneurship, of being a speaker, a social activist, a career coach, a gamification expert, etc. Gamification makes working out, eating healthy and leading an overall healthy life more fun, engaging and exciting.

Other benefits of lifestyle gamification include [12,18]:

- ✓ The competition, objectives, accomplishments, progress, and rewards are all gamification techniques that make you enjoy the game
- ✓ Playing games delivers us a host of “feel good” chemicals like endorphins and dopamine spikes
- ✓ Certain apps and games offer a range of rewards for completing tasks.

- ✓ Gamification engages brain chemistry
- ✓ It has reward-based progression
- ✓ It can in different ways improve your life
- ✓ It motivates and encourages productivity
- ✓ It helps us retain information
- ✓ It offers businesses insights into customer behavior, mentality, and motivations.
- ✓ It promotes social connection

CHALLENGES

Applying lifestyle gamification comes with challenges. Gamification is a new trend on which there is some dispute over what it all means. Elements such as reward points, achievements, and badges do not automatically translate into engagement. Gamification is not without controversy. Some worry it may be used to manipulate or exploit people.

Others are concerned that the lines between real life and gaming may go too far.

It is hard to design a game that is not too easy or hard and which can be played by diverse audiences. One can easily cheat in many games and using the techniques and apps would not magically fix all areas of your life. Projects that have been developed with good intentions may end up in creating ethically. Gamification ethics refers to the study and understanding of right and wrong conducts by gamified solutions. As gamification taps into the natural playfulness of human beings, ethical issues are prevalent and must be considered by the developers [19].

As with most things in life, money is involved in games and gamification lifestyle. Developers and publishers constantly have to consider budgets, profits, and everything in between. Some may disregard this whole thing as a waste of time and resources. There is always the chance someone could abuse this. Companies could use the gaming ideas to take all your money and do more harm than good [20].

In spite of the challenges, some digital health companies have successfully integrated game elements into their products to promote healthy living.

CONCLUSION

Gamification is an intriguing phenomenon that seeks to motivate people by applying game design elements to non-gaming contexts like education, work, business, and healthcare. Gamification involves using game mechanics and dynamics in non-game contexts. App and digital product owners use gamification to motivate users to complete tasks. Although there is a right game app for everyone, to successfully incorporate gamification into your lifestyle requires that you first find an approach that resonates with you personally.

Without doubt lifestyle gamification is here to stay because we are all gamers at heart.

The options for gamifying life are growing and evolving. There is an app for almost anything you wish to achieve. For more information about lifestyle gamification, one should consult the books in [21-23] and a related journal: *Journal of Games, Games Art, and Gamification*.

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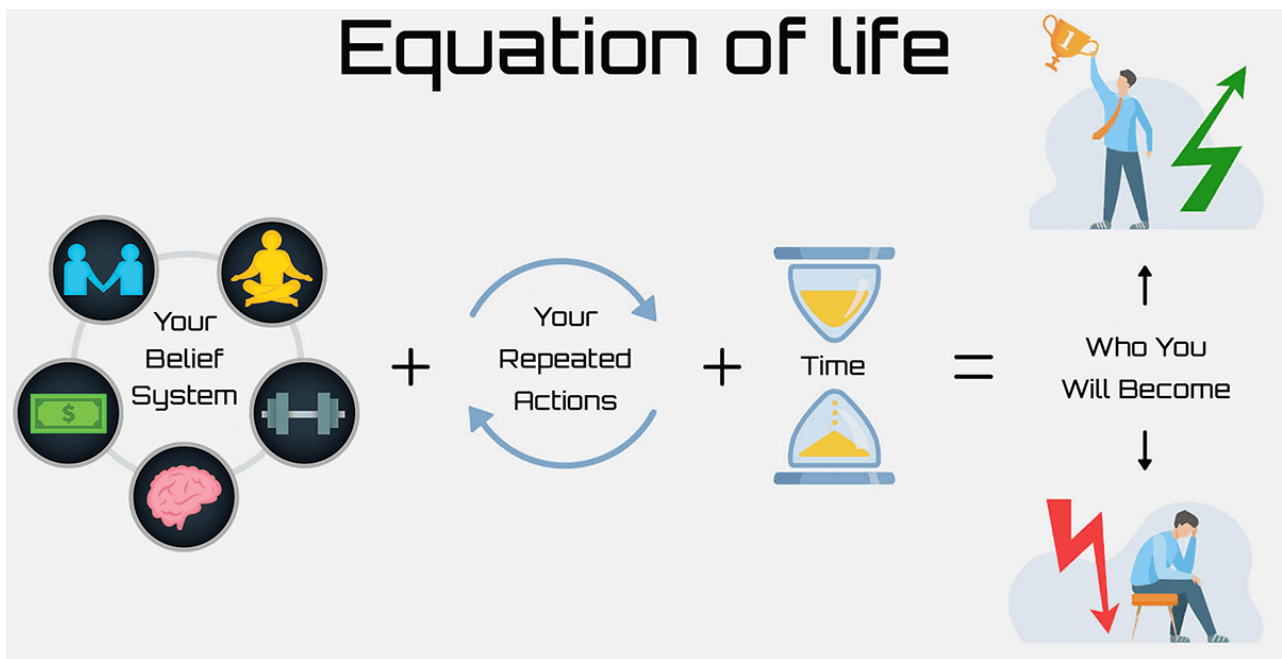


Figure 1. The equation of life [1].

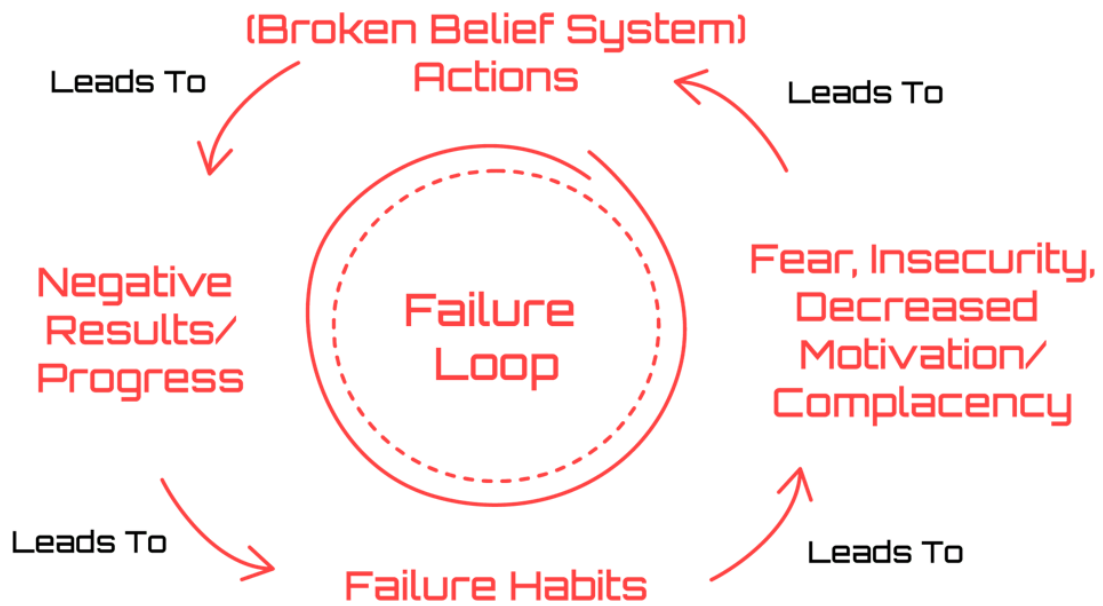


Figure 2. A failure loop [1].



Figure 3. Different uses of games.



Figure 4. A typical application of gamification in health [10].



Figure 5. An example of fitness gamification [14].